

What is Human Trafficking?

Human Trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to exploit a person for labor or commercial sex. **It is estimated that between 20 – 30 million men, women and children around the world are victims of human trafficking.** The United States is a source, transit and destination for some of these victims – both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals – who are subjected to forced labor, debt bondage, involuntary servitude and commercial sex trafficking. The U.S. Department of Justice, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that, each year, **as many as 100,000 – 300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex in the U.S.**

While some victims are smuggled between countries, **human trafficking does NOT require movement or transport across borders. In fact, a person can be trafficked without ever leaving his or her hometown.**

Traffickers/exploiters can be male or female and include family members, “pimps”, gangs and strangers as well as older “boyfriends” or “girlfriends” who initially entice their vulnerable victims with acts of kindness and promises of “love”.

Who are the Victims? Who is at Risk?

Trafficking victims can be men or women, boys or girls, U.S. citizens or foreign nationals. Studies show that **80% of human trafficking victims are female, and; over 50% are children.** Youth with a history of sexual abuse or substance abuse, foster care or other out of home placements, unstable family situations, or involvement with the juvenile justice system as well as runaway and homeless youth, disabled youth, and LGBTQ youth are at particularly high risk of being trafficked. **Studies show that the average age a girl is coerced or forced into the commercial sex industry is 12–14 years old. For boys, it’s even younger at 11–13 years old.**

Traffickers may target young victims through false advertising for “modeling”, “acting” or “dancing” opportunities, social media websites, telephone chat lines, on the streets, at shopping malls, in clubs and/or through older students who are used by traffickers to recruit other victims in school or after school programs.

Where Does Human Trafficking Likely Occur?

Human trafficking victims can be found in a wide variety of settings including but not limited to:

- The sex industry (street prostitution, brothels, motels/hotels or truck stops, on-line pornography, strip clubs, escort services, massage parlors, hostess clubs/cantinas/bars)
- Domestic situations (housecleaning, babysitting, elder care)
- Construction, gardening/landscaping, agriculture/farm work, service industry (restaurants, hotels/motels), factories, small businesses, and peddling or begging crews.

How Do I Identify a Victim of Human Trafficking?

A victim may exhibit some of these signs:

Sex Trafficking Signs

- Excess amount of cash or goods without obvious means or plausible explanation
- Possession of Hotel keys
- Lying about age / false ID
- Inconsistencies in story
- Has engaged in commercial sex acts
- Any mention of a pimp/"Daddy" or being in "the Life"
- Knowledge of strip clubs, sexually oriented internet sites (Facebook, Backpage, Craigslist, etc.)
- Appears to be under the control of another person
- History of pregnancies, miscarriages, STDs
- Exhibits bruises or other physical trauma; withdrawn behavior, depression, fear or hyper-awareness
- Runaway behaviors
- Inability to regularly attend school
- Physically exhausted
- Boyfriend/girlfriend is significantly older
- Makes reference to frequent travel
- May show signs of drug or alcohol addiction
- Cannot produce identification documents

Labor Trafficking Signs

- Unclear family relationships / No evidence of legal guardianship / works for "aunt" or "uncle"
- Child is fearful of family s/he lives with
- Sleeps apart from other family members
- Child is responsible for child care, elder care and/or cleaning beyond norm for age
- Excluded from "family" events (church, vacations, parties)
- Eats / sleeps separately from "family"
- Works excessively long hours
- Physically exhausted / may be malnourished
- Inability to regularly attend school
- Exhibits bruises or other physical trauma; withdrawn behavior, depression, fear or hyper-awareness
- Cannot produce identification documents

Note: This is not a comprehensive list of all of the signs of human trafficking and persons who exhibit these signs are not always trafficking victims.

What Can I Do to Help?

If you suspect someone is a Victim of Human Trafficking:

- Contact **EAC Network's Child Advocacy Center at (631) 439-0480** for assistance and services within Suffolk County. After 5:00 pm and on weekends, contact the **Safe Harbour hotline number at (631) 533-5658**.
- If you suspect the child's parent/guardian is involved in the trafficking, call the **New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) at 1-800-342-3720**.
- The [National Human Trafficking Resource Center \(NHTRC\)](#) is a toll-free, national hotline for the human trafficking field in the United States and is reached by calling **888-3737-888** or emailing

nhtrc@polarisproject.org. The NHTRC provides emergency assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. **Referrals are confidential.**

- Text “**Help**” or “**Info**” to **BeFree (233733)**
- **If you believe the victim is in immediate danger, please call 9-1-1.**

Help spread the word by sharing this information with contractors, co-workers, family and friends and ask them to do the same.

Additional Resources

General:

[EAC Safe Harbour Program Brochure](#)

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/anti-trafficking

www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/

www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/pio/humantrafficking/humantrafficking.htm

www.missingkids.com/home

www.polarisproject.org/

<http://gems-girls.org>

<http://sharedhope.org>

Parents/Guardians:

[TRUST - How to Talk to Your Kids about Trafficking](#)

Educational/School Professionals:

[Human Trafficking in Americas Schools 2015](#)

Mental Health Professionals:

[STIR Mental Health Brochure](#)

If you are interested in learning more about identifying and assisting child trafficking victims in Suffolk County, please contact Suffolk County’s Safe Harbour Program by calling Shannon Speed, Case Coordinator, at (631) 439-0480 or emailing shannon.speed@eacinc.org .